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## Private Public Business

In succeeding Allen W. Dulles as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, John A. McCone has one conspicuous qualification. As chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, he heads the other of the two government agencies about which the public knows next to nothing.

In setting up the AEC, Congress was faced with an unprecedented situation. Nuclear fission was the product of secrecy—the biggest secret ever kept. Though nuclear fission has many civilian applications (most of them still potential) much of the science and technics involved had to remain secret because of their overriding military importance.

That has remained the situation from 1946 until today. There are aspects of the commission's work known only to the President and the National Security Council, other aspects that never get beyond the ears of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, much more that is unknown to the rank and file of Congress let alone the people.

At the top, the AEC is the classic type of the "closed" politics which operates in government yet independent of normal functions, its momentous decisions taken in secret and as a result of clashes of personality and interests which the general public knows nothing whatever. This "closed" politics is big with the concept of that day. If ever it was appropriate in the present to have a U-2 observer over Russia, it was necessary and it was on May 1, 1960.

Beyond the fact that Mr. McCone is in the middle of all already steeped in the secret politics of our open society, hence privy to the activities of the CIA would be decisions already taken but not revealed. It appears in the public has very little basis to judge his qualifications for his new job. Public comment on it is rare.